



Commandant's Note

MAJOR GENERAL CARL F. ERNST Chief of Infantry

MOUT—PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

The need to conduct military operations on urban terrain (MOUT) is nothing new, and I want to bring you up to speed on what we have done—and are continuing to do—to prepare our Infantry to win in what may well be the toughest combat condition. In every war fought during this century—as well as in many earlier conflicts—combatants on both sides have been confronted with the challenge of dislodging a determined enemy who has chosen to go to ground in built-up areas. The MOUT fight has always been a manpower-intensive and highly costly one, both in terms of casualties and in terms of the time and ammunition it demands. The lessons of Stalingrad, Manila, Aachen, and Berlin in World War II, the bitter fighting to eject North Korean and Chinese forces from the towns and cities of Korea, and the U.S. Army and Marine Corps units' fight to recapture the old Vietnamese imperial capitol of Hue in 1968 have all contributed to our pool of knowledge on how to conduct the MOUT fight. More recently, our experience in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993 and Russian operations in Chechnya in 1994 validated some of our MOUT tactics and techniques while showing the need for further training and doctrinal modifications.

We realize that extensive collateral damage is not always an unavoidable consequence of operations in built-up areas, and that too much may in fact hamper our own forces' ability to maneuver, evacuate casualties, and resupply units in contact. We have likewise learned that timely, informed control of population movements can both reduce casualties among the indigenous population and yield valuable information on enemy dispositions, capabilities, and intentions. This human intelligence can be a significant combat multi-

plier in the fast-paced, ever-changing MOUT fight, and is one that we must learn to fully exploit.

Technological advances have given us unchallenged control of the night and other conditions of reduced visibility; now we can move about freely while denying the enemy the same advantage. In an achievement limited to science fiction a generation ago, we can now detect the presence of living persons in buildings and confined spaces by means of thermal imagery, acoustical enhancement devices, and motion detectors. This technology has found valuable application outside of combat as well, being used to locate survivors of earthquakes and other natural disasters, and its value in reducing casualties among our soldiers is no less significant. Fratricide, a particular concern in the close-quarters MOUT environment, will be reduced by the latest soldier and vehicle identification systems available to us, while we possess state-of-the-art abilities to identify and target enemy personnel and vehicles.

We have not been idle since our return from Somalia: our doctrine, our training and leader development, and our ongoing initiatives all reflect our emphasis on preparing to fight the enemy wherever we may find him. We are currently laying the groundwork for a study to develop an overarching MOUT training strategy that will meet the needs of all units up to and including brigades tasked to execute missions under MOUT conditions. This will not be a unilateral effort of the Infantry: it will demand the best efforts of all Army combat, combat support, and combat service support branches. Additionally, in a tradition of intraservice cooperation that goes back to the earliest days of our Republic, the Army and the United States Marine Corps (USMC) have been examining and conducting warfighting ex-

periments on ways to improve the operational capabilities of Soldiers and Marines in MOUT. Part of this joint effort has been an evaluation of advanced capabilities that will continue to assure us of technological dominance in the fight to secure built-up areas. Another element of the process has been preparation for the rapid acquisition of selected technologies once we have identified their potential value. The final part of the MOUT equation is the ongoing Army and Marine Corps partnership to provide operational units with the tactics, techniques, and procedures to give them interim capabilities beyond those they already possess, until the full array of technological advantages is within their grasp.

This is the azimuth we are following; now let me talk about some of the experiments that USMC and the Army are executing to reach our common goal. The Marines are testing a man-portable shield—a similar but much improved version of that used by civilian police and rescue units—and a non-explosive breaching means that will reduce collateral damage to personnel and structures, and that will enable U.S. forces to more quickly enter the room or building of interest. They are likewise refining systems to positively identify friendly personnel, develop a sensor to afford deployed units an accurate imaging of what is on the other side of a wall, and a stun grenade that will complement rapid entry and room clearing operations. This, coupled with the Corps' countersniper initiatives, will significantly reduce an enemy's options in the MOUT environment.

Army efforts, for which the Infantry School is the lead, have kept pace with the Marines' progress, developing and testing materiel improvements as diverse as remote marking, joint protection, a protective mask better suited to MOUT, improved obscurants, and blunt training munitions and frangible bullets to heighten training realism. The Army is also testing technologies to let us put soldiers on top of buildings faster than we can today, giving us a positional advantage over adversaries. We have made progress on the development of a non-line-of-sight radio, a personnel protection kit, and a personnel restraint system that will facilitate the control and handling of prisoners. We are refining casualty evacuation equipment and procedures, developing an improved sling, a combat identification system, and an inside position locator that will improve both soldiers' situational awareness and their ability to request and adjust supporting fires.

Experience has highlighted the need for a munition that will breach walls and similar barriers without excessive collateral damage, and we are examining options that will allow us to create a man-sized hole while

leaving a structure largely intact. One of these, the Remotely Launched Entry Munition, is currently undergoing testing. Another Army project—the updating and production of high resolution maps for areas of potential interest—will enhance the operational capabilities of all services. General Patton may have had to rely upon a Michelin Guide for some of his maps in World War II, but we can do better than that for our deployed forces. These are some of the initiatives that we and our sister service are currently working, and whose many benefits we will jointly share.

As the focal point for MOUT doctrine, training, and materiel, the Combined Arms MOUT Task Force will ultimately oversee publication of the update of Army MOUT doctrine at brigade level and below. This revision will incorporate the recommendations of an Infantry School MOUT study that embraces the whole spectrum of doctrine, training, leader development, organization, materiel, and soldier (DTLOMS) issues. The doctrine will increasingly address larger unit operations, and will include lessons learned from our own and our allies' stability operations in Haiti, Macedonia, and Bosnia. It will likewise draw upon the results of the MOUT Advanced Concepts Technology Demonstration and multiple Joint Readiness Training Center and Combat Maneuver Training Center rotations. The updated Army MOUT doctrine will refine the discussion of close-quarters battle techniques and breaching, and will discuss the role of joint forces and nongovernmental organizations in MOUT. The roles of snipers in Sarajevo, Bosnia, and other regions have not gone unnoticed either: the doctrinal revision will address both sniper and countersniper operations in the detail they deserve.

The urban battle is the scenario of choice for many of our potential adversaries. As the world becomes increasingly urbanized, an enemy lacking either the resolve or the materiel assets to face us in open combat will hope to draw us into a protracted house by house battle of attrition, in the hope of inflicting losses as high as they were in past wars. But we need not—and will not—duplicate the mistakes of the past. Circumstances may demand that we seek out an enemy who has chosen to hide in built-up areas, and in the midst of a civilian populace, but the Infantry will be better prepared than ever before to deal with such an eventuality. The initiatives that I have outlined will ensure that U.S. Army Infantrymen and U.S. Marines—working jointly or independently—will continue to develop and retain the ability and the resolve to deploy quickly, hit hard, and get the job done right the first time out. Hooah!